

Idaho Trade Token Newsletter

Boise, Idaho

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News

Just a reminder: The Second Annual Gathering of Idaho token collectors will be in the Salmon, Idaho area on July 17-19. See last month's Newsletter for details. Dean Rasmussen can answer questions you may have. It is certain to be a great outing! I just finished reading a pair of small books by Roberta H. Green, They Followed the Glory Trail and They Passed This Way. Both are interesting collections of stories of the pioneers of Custer and Lemhi Counties. They have gotten me ready to see some sights this July.

Restrikes

I have been thinking of how to put this story in print for some time. It is quite lengthy, so maybe I should call this a "special edition". Not knowing all the facts, I hesitate to draw any conclusions, or even state some things as fact, so I will preface this article with a statement that the following contains unverified and possibly incomplete information. It is pieced together from several sources and contains some suppositions on my part. It is presented in an effort to educate the collector body. Any additions, changes, or corrections are welcomed.

When Frank Schell was active in the token-collecting hobby, he developed a deep interest in the common reverse dies used with Idaho tokens. His cataloguing efforts tried to list all reverses and he formulated a system of categorizing reverse dies. This, and the large number of Salt Lake Stamp Company tokens in southern Idaho, led him to visit the source of many Idaho tokens in Salt Lake in about 1968. There he was shown the manufacturing process and many of the dies used to make tokens. While looking through the dies, Schell saw many "new" ones, ones for which he had never seen the real token. He was given or purchased a selection of the obverse dies and a few reverse ones, primarily ones he did not have catalogued.

Here, I will digress for the benefit of those who have not seen a token die. Most of the ones used to make Idaho tokens start out as a piece of soft steel bar stock. The diameter was chosen to correspond with the round part of the finished product, and the stock was cut to a two or three inch length. One end was machined flat, the bead or denticle border stamped, then individual letter dies were used to punch the legend into the soft steel. If the small Salt Lake Stamp Co. logo was used, it was punched as a unit, as were any ornaments used as part of the design. Next, the die was hardened by heat treating. A stock reverse die was chosen or a custom one made, both placed in the coining press, and the blank planchets were struck.

Frank had a background in machine working, and was working part-time for Lynn Langdon in his machine shop at the time. He believed that the tokens from the dies he had would show up eventually, and since he was actively working on the second edition of the Idaho catalog, he wanted to include them. This necessitated a photograph of the token, so he hit upon the idea of making an impression of each die and taking a picture of it to illustrate the catalog. He poured a thin sheet of lead, then carefully placed the die on it and hit it with a hammer, resulting in a pretty good representation of the token. The difficulty came when he used shears to cut the round impression out of the lead sheet. It was impossible to get a good round cut, and even after spray painting them with a copper-colored paint, the pieces looked exactly like the lead impressions they were. Schell packaged these impressions in 2x2 holders and kept them for years, finally selling most of them to John Gold and others in about 1979.

Schell needed a better-looking token example to illustrate his token catalog; it was at this point, I feel, that Schell obtained the help of fellow collectors Lynn Langdon of Buhl and James Brennan of Filer. Since they had both obverse and reverse dies and access to a punches and a press in Langdon's shop, they determined to strike examples of the various tokens. Starting with planchets punched from aluminum and brass sheet stock, they "struck" a quantity of examples from each die.

From this point on, I fail to follow Schell's thinking. He listed most, but not all, of these in his 1970 Second Edition of Idaho Merchants' Tokens just as if they were actual tokens. He assigned a reverse number to each, and listed it in either brass or aluminum. When Frank turned the Idaho token cataloguing responsibilities over to me, I purchased a number of tokens from him. There was one of the "restrikes" in the bunch, and no mention of it not being legitimate was made. When he finally donated his collection to the Idaho Historical Museum, there were quite a few which ended up in the Museum collection, similarly with no indication that they were not real. I've never felt that there was any intention to defraud collectors or others with these strikes, despite these and other instances where they were sold or traded.

I was under the impression that there was a very limited quantity made - I supposed not over three of a "type", but now, after visiting Lynn Langdon last summer, I got the impression that he was in possession of a much larger quantity. At that time, Lynn was offering them for sale at \$7.50 each. When Lois Langdon asked me for advice on disposing of them, I suggested that they be destroyed, but I don't know what she will chose to do with them.

The purpose of this article, then, is to educate the collecting community on these pieces, to indicate how to recognize one, and to list the ones I know. As Idaho collectors, we need to decide what to call them. I have used the term "Restrike", but I recognize that they are not that. They are not "Fantasy" tokens as the dies were legitimately used on tokens. The term "Counterfeit" implies that they were made from illegitimate dies. A "Mule" somewhat fits as they were usually made from mismatched obverse and reverse dies, however they were made outside of the stamp company. My leaning now is toward the term "Fake", but one of the definitions I see is "designed to deceive or cheat" and I do not believe that was the original intent. Let me hear your input on a good word to use in describing these. Robert Campbell took a swipe at these pieces in his Utah Trade Tokens: "Unfortunately, some counterfeiting has crept into the token collecting hobby. While the problem is not as prevalent in Utah as it is in some other western states [i.e. Nevada, Idaho, etc...], it does exist." I don't think the problem is prevalent, but it is important that we all understand the problem and help collectors, especially the newcomers, to be able to recognize them.



Real →
←Fake

21mm
Brass



The diagnostics of one of these pieces may appear complex, but after seeing a few examples, they become fairly easy to spot. It is interesting to note that I know of only one case where the obverse and reverse dies are matched the same as on a legitimate token. That is #SWV-1, E. R. KOPP / SWAN / VALLEY / IDAHO // GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE, 21mm rd br.

1. All of these fakes are round and either brass or aluminum. Some were made in both brass and aluminum. I would not be surprised to hear of examples in both metals for all varieties.

2. They have seen no wear from circulation, however the brass ones often exhibit darkness in "splotched" areas [perhaps due to artificial aging with a chemical] and the aluminum ones generally exhibit a "grainy" surface.

3. There is usually some sort of damage around the edges which I attribute to the method of pressing them, rather than striking them within a collar as would have been done by the Salt Lake Stamp Co. Some have been "touched up" with a file around the edges, while some [like the Swan Valley one shown above] have an extra "ring" of metal around the periphery.

4. Often a portion of both the obverse and reverse is weakly struck, which I attribute to the obverse and reverse die surfaces not being exactly parallel when they were pressed. Examine the edge of the piece with a magnifier to see the edge irregularities and possible difference in thickness from one side to the other.

5. To my knowledge, there were only four reverse dies used:

- GOOD FOR / 5¢ / IN TRADE (Schell reverse #1-A-3)
- GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE (Schell reverse #15-D) [there is typically a crack in the die below the D and E of TRADE.]
- GOOD FOR / 12½¢ / IN TRADE (Schell reverse #11-Q-6)
- GOOD FOR / \$25 / IN TRADE (Schell reverse #25)



The Hill City fake pictured has the characteristic weak strike on the lower right side of both obverse and reverse. The centering of the reverse is uneven and there is some evidence of a double-striking, although I cannot imagine why it should be that way.



The Cambridge fake pictured is weakly struck on the lower left of the obverse and the lower right of the reverse. This brass fake shows the edge of a dark stain on the right side of the reverse, supporting the theory that the brass pieces were artificially darkened with a chemical.



The Kuna fake shows the weakly struck area on the upper right of the obverse and the top of the reverse. The die alignment was so bad that the tops of the letters in the weak area appear to be worn away. It, too, shows some staining on the bottom of the obverse.



Little evidence of a weak strike is seen in this Yellow Pine fake, just a bit of imperfection in the first part of GOOD on the reverse.

The notable thing about this piece is the \$25 reverse. It evidently interested Frank Schell, as he had not listed it previously. There are three fakes using this reverse, one DeLamar piece and brass and aluminum Yellow Pine ones.

Of the 86 fakes I have listed, there are 58 businesses represented if the Bear Lake Fish and Game Club is counted. This obverse die was used to make a membership token, not a "good for". Of the 58 businesses, probably 25% are not represented by real tokens reported to me. It is a pretty safe assumption that the Salt Lake Stamp Company did not make dies on speculation - they only made them up when a token order was received. This tells us that there are many more "new" tokens out there, just waiting to be discovered!

Some of the dies used to make these fakes have been sold to various collectors. In fact, many collectors have dies from the Salt Lake Stamp Company and other token manufacturers. These are the only fakes known to me, but it is entirely possible that in the future, someone will use their dies to make fakes. My opinion is that we should all agree on making some sort of mark on each die we own which would make any fakes made from that die apparent.

It has been interesting to note that the "die splashes" or lead impressions which John Gold had far outnumber the fake tokens. From this I suppose that either not all dies were used to make fakes, or there exist fakes not on this list. As with other Idaho token listings, I appreciate reports of new pieces.

So, how harmful are these fakes? Many collectors enjoy putting a rubbing of a token from a scarce town in their book if they aren't the fortunate one to own the token. Extend this from a rubbing to a photograph to a lead impression to a fake. Where can the line be drawn? I don't think a line needs to be drawn as long as the owner realizes he has a fake and doesn't try to trade or sell a fake to an unsuspecting fellow collector. And if collectors new to Idaho tokens learn to recognize these fakes from real tokens, nobody will be harmed. A collector should understand that these fakes do exist - they are a real aspect of Idaho token collecting which is not going to either go away or get out of control.

I would have preferred that Frank Schell had indicated in his catalogs that these tokens were not real and that he had made uniface strikings similar to the Anillo restrikes marketed in token publications several years ago.

Our gathering in Salmon next month would be a great opportunity to do a "show and tell" with our fakes. Please go through your collection and pull out the fakes - bring them to Salmon and let us look them over. I think it would be educational for each of us to look at a number of examples to get a better feel for the "look" of a fake.

If you have anything to add to this story, I would welcome input. Many of you have knowledge of aspects of this story which I have missed or assumed. If there is significant information, I will publish it in a follow-up article. But, for now, here is the list of fakes I have compiled. Question marks indicate areas where I have incomplete or questionable information.

Known fake Idaho trade tokens - June, 1998

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ABE-1RS	J. A. MOORE / ABERDEEN / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	21 Rd Br
AMF-19RS / RKL-4RS	PETERSON BROS. / ROCKLAND / & AM. FALLS GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Al
AMF-2(D)RS	CAPITOL BAR / AMERICAN / FALLS, / IDAHO. GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	21 Rd Al
ARC-3RS	JAS. W. THOMPSON / ARCO / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Br
ARI-1RS	THE TRIANGLE / ARIMO / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	21 Rd Al
ARI-1RS	THE TRIANGLE / ARIMO / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	21 Rd Br
ARI-2RS	ARIMO BILLIARD HALL / ARIMO / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Al
BAN-2RS	OREGON TRAIL / INN / BANCROFT / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	26 Rd Al
BLI-2(B)RS	ED. S. JUDD / BLISS / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Al
BLI-2(E)RS	ED. S. JUDD / BLISS / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Br
BO-124RS	EAGLE CIGAR STORE / 927 / MAIN ST. / BOISE / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	? Rd ?
CAMB-5RS	W. C. VOGEL / CAMBRIDGE / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Br
CAMB-5RS	W. C. VOGEL / CAMBRIDGE / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Al
CAST-2(B)RS	CASTLEFORD / PASTIME / CASTLEFORD / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Al
CHAL-3(A)RS	K. C. POOL HALL / CHALLIS / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	26 Rd Al
CLAY-3RS	J. W. NANSON / CLAYTON / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	21 Rd Br
CULD-1RS	N. P. / SALOON / CULDESAC GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Br
CULD-1RS	N. P. / SALOON / CULDESAC GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Al
D-2(A)RS	DE LAMAR / DEN / DE LAMAR, IDAHO. GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	21 Rd Al
D-2(A)RS	DE LAMAR / DEN / DE LAMAR, IDAHO. GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	21 Rd Br
D-2RS	DE LAMAR / DEN / DE LAMAR, IDAHO. GOOD FOR / 5¢ / IN TRADE	24 Rd Br
D-2RS	DE LAMAR / DEN / DE LAMAR, IDAHO. GOOD FOR / \$25 / IN TRADE	24 Rd Br
DOW-4RS	CHET'S / PLACE / DOWNEY / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	21 Rd Al
DRU-2RS	JOHN / MCFARLIN / DRUMMOND / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Al

DRU-2RS	JOHN MCFARLIN / DRUMMOND / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Br
DUD-2RS	THOMAS THERIAULT, / DUDLEY, / IDAHO. GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	21 Rd Br
EAG-5RS	EAGLE CIGAR STORE / EAGLE / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Al
EG-1(B)RS	EGIN MERC. CO. / E. J. / RUMSEY / EGIN, IDAHO. GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	26 Rd Al
FAI-1(B)RS	J. F. PERKINS / FAIRFIELD / S. L. / STAMP / CO. / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Al
FAI-1(B)RS	J. F. PERKINS / FAIRFIELD / S. L. / STAMP / CO. / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	26 Rd Br
FAI-2RS	CLUB CIGAR STORE / FAIRFIELD / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 5¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Br
GLF-10RS	UNION / POOL HALL / GLENN'S / FERRY / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Br
GRA-3RS	ROGHAARS / GENERAL / MERCHANDISE / GRACE, IDAHO. GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	24 Rd Br
GRA-3RS	ROGHAARS / GENERAL / MERCHANDISE / GRACE, IDAHO. GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	24 Rd Al
HILC-3RS	JOE LACHMAN / HILL CITY / IDAHO. GOOD FOR / 5¢ / IN TRADE	24 Rd Br
HILC-3RS	JOE LACHMAN / HILL CITY / IDAHO. GOOD FOR / 5¢ / IN TRADE	24 Rd Al
HSBD-4RS	EDWARD OLSEN / HORSESHOE / BEND / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Al
IC-10RS	C. F. ROWE / IDAHO / CITY GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Al
IC-11RS	LUNA HOUSE / LEX / ROSSI / IDAHO / CITY GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Al
IC-11RS	LUNA HOUSE / LEX / ROSSI / IDAHO / CITY GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Br
INK-1RS	H. R. RICHARDSON / INKOM / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Br
J-18RS	PIXTON'S / CANDY / ICE CREAM / LUNCHES / JEROME. IDA. GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	21 Rd Al
J-18RS	PIXTON'S / CANDY / ICE CREAM / LUNCHES / JEROME. IDA. GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	21 Rd Br
KEN-5RS	F. B. TRADER, / KENDRICK, / IDA. GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	21 Rd Br
KU-2RS	FOLWELL & TALLMAN / KUNA / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Br
LEWI-35RS	NELLIE NORVELL / 2904 / MAIN ST / OWEN HOTEL / LEWISTON / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 5¢ / IN TRADE	24 Rd Br
LEWI-35RS	NELLIE NORVELL / 2904 / MAIN ST / OWEN HOTEL / LEWISTON / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 5¢ / IN TRADE	24 Rd Al
LEWI-36(A)RS	THE ANNEX / LEWISTON / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	21 Rd Al
LEWI-36RS	THE ANNEX / LEWISTON / IDA. GOOD FOR / 5¢ / IN TRADE	24 Rd Br

LHS-3(A)RS	THE MISSION / LAVA / HOT SPRINGS / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Al
MCAM-3RS	DUTCH'S PLACE / MCCAMMON / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	21 Rd Br
MID-1(B)RS	PROPERTY OF GRIMES DRUG CO. / MIDDLETON / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Al
MID-1RS	GRIMES / DRUG CO. / MIDDLETON / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Al
MUL-7RS	THE / HOTEL / VICTOR / MULLAN, IDA GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Br
MUL-7RS	THE / HOTEL / VICTOR / MULLAN, IDA GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Al
PAS-1RS	BEAR LAKE FISH / GAME CLUB / AND / MEMBER / 1930 / PARIS, IDAHO. GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	26 Rd Al
PEG-1RS	SLEIGHT'S CASH STORE / GENL. MDS. / PEGRAM / IDAHO. GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Al
PLA-3RS	PLACERVILLE / CIGAR STORE / PLACERVILLE / IDAHO. GOOD FOR / 5¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Br
PLA-3RS	PLACERVILLE / CIGAR STORE / PLACERVILLE / IDAHO. GOOD FOR / 5¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Al
PLA-5(A)RS	THE STOPE / PLACERVILLE / IDAHO (?) GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	21 Rd Al
PLA-5RS	THE STOPE / PLACERVILLE / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Al
PLA-5RS	THE STOPE / PLACERVILLE / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Br
PLA-6RS	PERCY & TUT / PLACERVILLE / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Br
PLA-6RS	PERCY & TUT / PLACERVILLE / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 5¢ / IN TRADE	24 Rd Br
PLA-6RS	PERCY & TUT / PLACERVILLE / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Al
RAT-3(B)RS	CLUB SALOON / RATHDRUM, / IDA. GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	21 Rd Br
RE-6(B)RS	FRED'S CIGAR STORE / REXBURG / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	21 Rd Br
RIG-3(A)RS	PALACE POOL HALL / RIGBY / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	26 Rd Br
RIG-6RS	WEBER AND ALLRED / RIGBY / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	26 Rd Br
RKL-4RS / AMF-19RS	PETERSON BROS. / ROCKLAND / & / AM. FALLS GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Al
SAM-1RS	D. D. WILLIAMS / SAMARIA / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	26 Rd Al
SAND-16RS	DE MARS & OLIVER / SANDPOINT, / IDA. GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	21 Rd Br
SH-7RS	KUNTER BROS. & BYBEE / SHELLEY / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	26 Rd Br
SODS-1(A)RS	AL'S PLACE / SODA / SPRINGS / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 5¢ / IN TRADE	24 Rd Br

SODS-1RS	AL'S PLACE / SODA / SPRINGS / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Br
SWV-1RS	E. R. KOPP / SWAN / VALLEY / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Br
SWV-1RS	E. R. KOPP / SWAN / VALLEY / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Al
VIC-3(E)RS	C. M. HATCH & CO. / GENERAL / MERCHANDISE / VICTOR, IDA. GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Al
VIC-3(F)RS	C. M. HATCH & CO. / GENERAL / MERCHANDISE / VICTOR, IDA. GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	25 Rd Br
VIC-5(A)RS	VICTOR BILL'D HALL / VICTOR / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Br
WALL-30RS	RYAN / HOUSE / WALLACE GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Br
WE-4RS	LONG'S / GROCERY / WENDELL / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 12 1/2¢ / IN TRADE	26 Rd Al
WIN-2RS	NICHOLSON / BROS. / WINCHESTER, / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Al
WIN-2RS	NICHOLSON / BROS. / WINCHESTER, / IDAHO GOOD FOR / 10¢ / IN TRADE	22 Rd Br
YEP-1RS	DAN'S PLACE / YELLOW PINE / IDAHO GOOD FOR / \$25 / IN TRADE	25 Rd Br
YEP-1RS	DAN'S PLACE / YELLOW PINE / IDAHO GOOD FOR / \$25 / IN TRADE	25 Rd Al

Best regards,

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